

Will the broadcast flag interfere with consumers ability to make copies of DTV content for their personal use, either on personal video recorders or removable media?

The broadcast flag will give the corporate sector complete control over the ability to make copies of DTV content. Along with much of the digital copyright law enacted in the past few years, it represents an unprecedented departure from the traditional defense of consumers' rights embodied in copyright law.

Would the digital flag interfere with consumers ability to send DTV content across networks, such as home digital networks connecting digital set top boxes, digital recorders, digital servers and digital display devices? The digital flag could easily permit the prohibition or restriction of cross-device transmission of content.

Would the broadcast flag requirement limit consumers ability to use their existing electronic equipment (equipment not built to look for the flag) or make it difficult to use older components with new equipment that is compliant with the broadcast flag standard?

In theory, of course, anyone could still use any existing electronic equipment. However, if content-providers would benefit from only providing content to flag-compliant equipment. In that case, the use of existing electronic equipment in isolation from any useful signals would be absurd.

Would a broadcast flag requirement limit the development of future equipment providing consumers with new options?

The requirement of the broadcast flag would effectively put the development of new equipment in the hands of powerful and well-connected agencies. It is important to remember how much of the useful technology of the past century was developed by private individuals, such as Bill Gates. The exponential rate of technological development is due in no small part to the freedom enjoyed by those in the open society of technology.

What will be the cost impact, if any, that a broadcast flag requirement would have on consumer electronics equipment?

It will almost certainly guarantee that costs rise.

Other Comments:

The development of effective policies on digital rights management, including broadcasts, is critical to the future of technology and the American technology industry. America is a nation of freedom, and by introducing restrictions on liberty that have no precedent in the previous forty years of the Information Age, or any other era of American history, the government could severely jeopardize America's preeminence in the field of technology.